CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method of exposing alignment marks on a substrate having at least one opaque overlaying the alignment marks, comprising the steps of:

providing a focused ion beam; and

exposing the alignment marks by impinging said focused ion beam against the at least one opaque layer to obliterate the at least one opaque layer substantially overlaying the alignment marks.

2. The method of claim 1 wherein said focused ion beam has a noble gas ion source.

3. The method of claim 1 wherein said focused ion beam has a current density of about 200-800 pA.

4. The method of claim 3 wherein said focused ion beam has a noble gas ion source.

5. The method of claim 2 wherein said noble gas ion source comprises argon.

6. The method of claim 5 wherein said focused ion beam has a current density of about 200-800 pA.

7. The method of claim 4 wherein said noble gas ion source comprises argon.

8. The method of claim 7 wherein said focused ion beam has a current density of about 200-800 pA.

9. A method of exposing alignment marks on a substrate having at least one opaque overlaying the alignment marks, comprising the steps of:

providing a focused ion beam; and

cutting an exposure opening in the at least one opaque layer to expose the alignment marks by impinging said focused ion beam against the at least one opaque layer.

10. The method of claim 9 wherein said focused ion beam has a noble gas ion source.

11. The method of claim 9 wherein said focused ion beam has a current density of about 200-800 pA.

12. The method of claim 11 wherein said focused ion beam has a noble gas ion source.

13. The method of claim 10 wherein said noble gas ion source comprises argon.

14. The method of claim 13 wherein said focused ion beam has a current density of about 200-800 pA.

15. The method of claim 12 wherein said noble gas ion source comprises argon.

16. A method of exposing alignment marks on a substrate having a transparent dielectric layer overlaying the alignment marks and at least one opaque layer overlying the dielectric layer, comprising the steps of:

providing a focused ion beam; and

cutting an exposure opening in the at least one opaque layer to the dielectric layer to visually expose the alignment marks by impinging said focused ion beam against the at least one opaque layer.

17. The method of claim 16 wherein said focused ion beam has a noble gas ion source.

18. The method of claim 16 wherein said focused ion beam has a current density of about 200-800 pA.

19. The method of claim 17 wherein said noble gas ion source comprises argon.

20. The method of claim 19 wherein said focused ion beam has a current density of about 200-800 pA.